

## Faith and Inspiration

# God of Everything (Including Viruses)

APOLLO: ... What else does mankind demand of its gods?

CAPTAIN KIRK: Mankind has no need for gods. We find the one quite adequate.

Scene from "Star Trek" original series episode "Who Mourns for Adonais?" The belief model of ancient polytheism attributes the various forces of what we call nature and the conceptual ideas and principles of life (e.g., love, beauty, luck, war, fertility, honor) to individual deities or supernatural beings.

On the other hand, the Bible indicates that the one God (specifically named Yahweh or Jehovah) is the ultimate source of everything, so essentially, he is the God of: "fill in the blank" (i.e., everything). Attempting to characterize and comprehend a comprehensive God can be rather tricky, even problematic. Perhaps this is part of the reason that ancient humanity found itself devolving into a more pluralistic theological sensibility following the Fall, after Adam and Eve decided to contrive their own concept of knowledge apart from God.

Yes, I know, many scholars insist that monotheism is a later development in human history, but taking the Genesis narrative into account, it would appear that the original sin of humankind involved a separation from a relationship with the one true God and led to an eventual descent into disparate theistic pursuits and queries, the practical outcome of which would seem to have been that humanity apparently developed a proclivity for identifying and manufacturing gods for everything.

Another seemingly natural tendency was to engage in persistent attempts to appease these presumed deities to gain favor and, somewhat ironically, attempt to exercise some degree of "control" over these mysterious forces that conceivably surround us.

Perhaps a reasonable question is that if the God of the Bible is indeed the all-in-one God, how does one reconcile some of the supposed paradoxes that confront us on a regular basis, such as the perceived state of the world in which we presently find ourselves – which, in perspective, is perhaps not any more chaotic and tumultuous than at any other time in human experience?

One of the more unfortunate and often distressing facts of life is that many factors of our environment, including infection and disease, can wreak havoc on society and civilization. As in times past, there are those who would attempt to associate occurrences such as viral outbreak with "God's wrath," citing instances of divine judgment throughout scripture.

In contrast, there are those who would conceptualize these critical and threatening events as somehow "proving" the non-existence of God – after all, a loving God wouldn't allow suffering, would he?

For either of these conjectures,

the best response may be to consider that the point of the God of Everything is that he is, in fact, the God of everything – he is not just the God of one thing or another or powerless to affect one thing or another.

Inherent in the lessons of the Bible is the notion that God is perfect and in him all things are perfectly balanced and harmonized; furthermore, God's version of everything is in fact a perfect version.

So does this mean he is a God of Wrath and a God of Justice? Undoubtedly.

Is he also a God of Love and a God of Mercy? Most certainly.

It might seem natural to wonder how that is possible. An earnest pursuit of Biblical spiritual truth would reveal that the answer, ultimately, is in Jesus. How so, one may ask? Let us

digress momentarily and then return to understand this conviction.

The Bible contains many verses that attest to God's authorship and ownership of all creation. For instance: "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him." Colossians 1:16 (NASB)

So if he is the God of Everything, that means he created everything, including the things which now appear to produce various kinds of suffering in life; that includes bacteria and viruses – and, well, human beings for that matter. If we assume that all of creation was created for a specific purpose and was in harmony before the Fall, it is probably not unreasonable to wonder what that purpose might be and what that harmony might look like – after all, God gave us a heart and mind with the urge to search out these truths. God, as the ultimate creative genius, apparently appreciated and enjoyed diversity among forms of life. Inasmuch as that is true, presumably God does what he does for a reason.

Although "his ways are not our ways" and the intricacies of life remain somewhat mysterious in the complexity of their design, it turns out that honest and open scientific inquiry can be quite helpful in our attempts to discover some inkling of these purposes. When considering microorganisms, while we might typically perceive bacteria and viruses to represent some of the more destructive or detrimental aspects of biological existence, the truth is that the majority of these are in fact quite helpful and important to sustaining the balance of organic operations.

For instance, current knowledge indicates that many types of bacteria are in fact beneficial – in many types of animals, including humans, they help contribute to proper digestion as well as a properly functioning immune system.

Furthermore, it may seem counterintuitive to common perception and sensibilities, but

various kinds of viruses have also been found to contribute positively to the natural immune system.

Additionally, some scientists speculate that the highly mutative nature of viruses might be a factor in transferring certain genetic properties among populations of organisms to aid in adaptation to different environments.\*

These kinds of insights may help to illustrate and support the notion that there is indeed a purpose for all things, and that the role of such microorganisms was originally not intended to be so pernicious as they might seem now. While these appear to be empirical and verifiable facts, it is also true that some of these "invisible" entities are responsible for some of the ongoing physical suffering in our world. In keeping with the foregoing analysis, if they were part of creation and were meant to benefit rather than harm life, we should be able to derive some understanding of what accounts for the current apparently adverse nature of some of these microorganisms.

It may be helpful to keep in mind that the God of Everything is the God of the "visible and invisible." Remember that creation began as a cosmos designed for order and unanimity. Lamentably, sin was the initial catalyst for disrupting this natural coherence and synergy. Considering that our reality comprises of both physical and spiritual dimensions, it should make sense that sin as a disruptive factor in that reality triggered both physical and spiritual consequences. These consequences include some of the suffering we regularly experience and observe, including, presumably, that caused by viruses. This is not to say that specific or individual physical conditions are always caused by specific or individual sins, although there may be some evidence to indicate that in some instances there can be some correlation and perhaps even causation.

One could argue, then, that the God of Everything is also the God of Suffering. That might seem unappealing or even unacceptable at first, but what if that "God of Suffering" was not necessarily the God who causes suffering, but actually the God Who Knows Suffering? What if he thoroughly understands suffering in all of its wretched and miserable reality. One could readily observe that God experienced the ultimate suffering in Jesus' crucifixion – not only the physical agony and torment he endured, but the burden of bearing and paying for the sin of the entire world. In this way, the God of Wrath and Justice is also the God of Love and Mercy. He abided it all and provided it all because of his desire to redeem all of creation. He is, indeed, the God of Everything.

Thus, God is in control, and in his sovereignty allows things to occur that, on the one hand, might seem tragic and calamitous, but on the other hand, He can use to provide opportunities for us to demonstrate the better part of ourselves, to reflect the image of God in which we have been made – qualities such as cooperation, compassion, and innovation. Our prayer should be that God would grant us the wisdom to overcome our struggles and challenges, and in doing so, glorify him for all his goodness in the midst of our circumstances, which should be our ultimate aim.

\*This page from the "Answers in Genesis" Web site provides an interesting analysis on the role of viruses: <https://answersingenesis.org/>

To submit an obituary or death notice, email wording and jpg photo to [info@newsleadermail.com](mailto:info@newsleadermail.com). Print deadline is Wednesday at noon. 305-245-2311



Vincent V. Marshburn



**Branam Funeral Home**

809 North Krome Avenue.

## Ret. MSgt. M

Neil Vernon Watson, 76, of Georgia, passed away after a long battle with Parkinson's disease.

Neil is preceded in death by his father, Watson Sr. and Ethel, and his sisters Ethel "Bubba" and granddaughter A.

Neil was born in Georgia on July 4th, 1943. He graduated from High School, New Jersey, and served in the United States Air Force for 21 years, advancing to the rank of Major. His career took him to various parts of the world, including Germany, to Turkey, and over the United States. He lived in Colorado, to the sunny shores of Hawaii, and served tours in Vietnam, and culminated in being awarded the Bronze Star Award for his many accomplishments.

Neil worked as a pilot for Dade County, FL at the Fort Lauderdale Airport and two other locations for over 25 years. He was a avid sportsman and loved all sports, spending many hours to his children. His health started to decline in the late 1990s.

Neil is survived by his wife, Watson, his sisters L. Watson, his children, Boyle, his children, Watson III (Andrea), Tommy Bowden (J. Johnson, Tracey W. (Mickey), numerous great-grandchildren.

The burial will be held at Palms Woodlawn Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers, donations made to support research for Dementia in Mr. Watson would be appreciated. He wishes to thank Abigail Home, Meadows Funeral Home, and Conner.

Jesse White passed away at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital on 8/20/1935.

Jesse was an avid hunter.

He retired from the military at an early age then operated a business for years before moving to Florida.

He was a master craftsman, Past Master. A Master of the Club and Tin Lizzie participating in many parades elsewhere. He was a Shriner and Royal Master of a Kentucky Colony.

He was preceded in death by Alma White of Ind. and wife of 67 years, son Mark White, all of his grandchildren and siblings Jake White, Bill White Sr., all of his other relatives.

A Masonic Funeral will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory to Shriner would be appreciated. Beggs Funeral Home assisting the family.

## Avoiding

StatePoint-Decision about spending money are often driven by emotions even if what your heart is telling you goes against logic. Emotional financial choices may provide you with short-term happiness, but they are just as likely to result in long-term regret or

• Get an accurate picture of what it costs to maintain your lifestyle and fund your goals. Knowing your fixed and variable expenses will help you understand what you can afford to spend in the near future.

• Ask yourself if you want something or something before you buy it. If you do not or if it will make a difference in your